

REMARKS

Applicants requests reconsideration and allowance of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1, 2 and 4-16 are pending in the present application. Claims 1 and 12-16 are the independent claims.

Claim 3 has been cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. Claims 1, 5, 6, and 12-16 have been amended. No new matter has been added.

Initially, Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication that claims 3-7 recite patentable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the features of base claim 1 and all intervening claims. By the present Amendment, Applicants have cancelled allowable claim 3 and have amended independent claims 1 and 12-16 to recite features based on those of claim 3. Claims 2 and 4-11 depend from independent claim 1. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1, 2, and 4-16 are now in allowable form.

The Office Action objected to claims 5 and 6 on formal grounds. In response, Applicants have amended claims 5 and 6 to depend from claim 4.

Favorable consideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 14 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by JP 11-249449 (Yamazaki). Claims 1, 2, 8-13, and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP 05-35124 (Nishimura) in view of JP 04-345457 (Morikoshi) and JP 2001-350348 (Shimomura). All art rejections are respectfully traversed for the reason explained above, -- namely the inclusion of subject matter indicated as patentable over the citations of record.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully submits that the independent claims patentably define the present invention over the citations of record. Further, the dependent claims should also be allowable for the same reasons as their respective base claims and further due to the additional features that they recite. Separate and individual consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

Applicant believes that the present Amendment is responsive to each of the points raised by the Examiner in the Official Action. However, if there are any formal matters remaining after

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this response, The Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to such matters.

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

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By: *Michael E. Kondoudis*

Michael E. Kondoudis
Registration No. 42,758

1201 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1501